

**REPORT OF THE VISITORS  
REGARDING THE HOLY CROSS  
AND CATHOLIC CHARACTER OF  
MOREAU CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**



**TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY  
OF MOREAU CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL,  
HAYWARD, CALIFORNIA**

February, 2010  
v1.03



CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS  
South-West Province

February 28, 2010

Hon. Paul Delucchi  
Chairman of the Board  
Moreau Catholic High School  
27170 Mission Boulevard  
Hayward, CA 94544

Dear Judge Delucchi:

On behalf of the Mission Assessment Team which visited Moreau Catholic High School on February 7<sup>th</sup> through February 9<sup>th</sup> I simply wanted to communicate to the Trustees our most positive experience of the Moreau Catholic High School community. The Holy Cross Mission of Moreau Catholic High School is not simply within a statement which hangs on a wall somewhere; rather it truly lives in those who make up the school community. We experienced this in the board, in the administration, in the faculty and staff, and in the students.

It was clear to us as well that the Catholic identity of the school is recognized especially by the students. It is worth reminding ourselves that there is a connection between the school's Holy Cross identity and its Catholic identity. For Basil Moreau, these were supposed to be indistinguishable. Part of the strength of a Holy Cross identity comes through adherence to Catholic social teaching; this can be seen at Moreau Catholic as well.

We see that the mission is the lens through which many of your decisions as a board are made. We note this is true as well for the administrative team. That is a difficult stance to maintain, but it seems to be done well at Moreau Catholic. You are fortunate to have Terry Lee and Lauren Lek to lead your school community.

We thank the Trustees for your efforts to support Holy Cross and Catholic education in Hayward and the Diocese of Oakland. We thank you as well for the resources you provide to help continue to nurture students, administrators, the faculty and staff, and yourselves in Holy Cross values.

If any of the team can be of service to you as you continue in your efforts, please feel free to call upon us.

Sincerely for the Mission Assessment Team,

*Brother Donald Blauvelt, C.S.C.*

Brother Donald Blauvelt, C.S.C.  
Provincial

# **REPORT TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY OF MOREAU CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL Mission Assessment and Catholic Identity**

## **Introduction**

During the 2009-2010 academic year, the school community of Moreau Catholic High School spent a great deal of time and effort looking at the Catholic identity of the school and reviewing how the mission of the school shows itself within all corners of the institution. This review included the Board of Trustees, the Administration, the Faculty and Staff, parents, alumni, students.

In December, 2009, the school published its report on the community's review of its mission and Catholic identity. This report was a self-assessment by the school community based upon a great deal of evidence gathered throughout the first half of the school year.

From February 7<sup>th</sup> through February 9<sup>th</sup> of 2010, Moreau Catholic High School was visited by an assessment team appointed by the South-West Province of the Brothers of Holy Cross. This team was made up of the following:

Brother Donald Blauvelt, C.S.C., Provincial of the South-West Province

Ms. Theresa Billings, Principal of Holy Cross Middle School in New Orleans,  
Louisiana

Mr. Angel Cedillo, Principal of Holy Cross High School of San Antonio, Texas

Ms. Susan Marquess, Director of Guidance and Counseling at St. Francis High  
School of Mountain View, California

Mr. Terry McGaha, Director of Mission Outreach and Parent Programs at Notre  
Dame High School of Sherman Oaks, California

Brother Michael Winslow, C.S.C., Campus Ministry Associate at Our Lady of the Lake  
University in San Antonio, Texas.

The visiting team began its work meeting after a Mass prepared by the campus ministry team with the Board of Trustees and representatives of the school administration. It was clear at the team's first discussion with the Board of Trustees that the Board had a real commitment to the Holy Cross and Catholic mission of Moreau Catholic High School. The Board expressed a real commitment to making the school both desirable and attainable for Catholic families. The Board noted that many of the most active people in the local parishes are Moreau Catholic alumni. They believe that graduates leave the school with a sense of social responsibility. The Board

believes there is a real sense of balance promoted by the school which is part of its Holy Cross mission of completeness.

In discussion with the faculty and staff and with students, the four pillars were the structural context for the discussions—message, community, service and prayer. These also served as the structure for the school's self-assessment.

### **Pillar One: Message**

The first statement in the Mission Assessment document says: "Moreau Catholic High School is committed to living the Catholic, Holy Cross heritage. The school, guided by the Holy Spirit, sees everything through the eyes of faith."

It was clear from our conversations with students, faculty and staff members, administrators and board members that there is a community ownership of the comprehensive and impressive Catholic Identity and Holy Cross Mission Assessment report. Throughout the school campus and community there is evidence that the school does indeed foster a Catholic, Holy Cross identity in its life and in all of its activities. Besides an abundant existence of Catholic and Holy Cross icons throughout the campus, everyone has an understanding and a firm grasp of the language and values related to the Holy Cross heritage, mission and charism.

Holy Cross mission is weaved into the fiber of the Moreau Catholic High School community and it is clearly integrated across all boundaries; this is a great credit to all of the educators as well as to the student leaders at Moreau. It is refreshing to see the responsibilities of mission shared and communicated among both adults and students. From ASB, Campus Ministry and Link Crew, to randomly selected students from the classrooms or hallway a visitor will likely receive an explanation and passion of the importance of Holy Cross Mission to all that happens at Moreau Catholic.

The administration, faculty and student leaders utilize the four Holy Cross themes as educational tools to reinforce Holy Cross mission to all members of the Moreau community. Storytelling, a powerful and very traditional form of carrying forth the legacy of Holy Cross, is used by students and adults thereby making the experience embracing for all involved.

To the eye, the Catholic Identity message is present in documentation and practice at Moreau Catholic. There seems to be a partnership with the local Diocese and parishes and examples of individual and group participation in the local Church is cited in the report and reiterated in our dialogue.

The visiting team agrees with the self-assessment of a need for more opportunities for expression of the Catholic faith of Moreau Catholic High School and strengthening the communication and partnership with local parish educators and community. While there seems to be a perceived separation between "the Catholic way and the Holy Cross way," everyone needs to remember that a major part of Father Moreau's work and intent was to restore the Catholic church in 19<sup>th</sup> century France and to help the local Church to reconnect with the universal Church. This was as

important to him as moving the education process from what was traditional and classical to the process of teaching young people “everything they need to know.”

## **Pillar 2: Community**

It is clearly evident that the spirit of community is alive and well at Moreau Catholic High School. The visiting team sensed this spirit from the welcoming liturgy on Sunday morning to meetings with students, faculty, staff and administrators. Students feel part of the Holy Cross community before their arrival through the Link Crew and orientation program. Various constituencies—board, parents, faculty and staff support each other through social and spiritual opportunities such as the weekly Wednesday morning masses, which are open to everyone. Everyone we came in contact with while we were at Moreau resoundingly stated that they are part of a family.

Students of diverse social, economic and ethnic backgrounds report feeling accepted and welcomed into the Moreau Catholic community. Students report being offered ample opportunity to be involved in various aspects of community from ASB, athletic teams, and liturgies. Parents are given multiple opportunities to feel apart of the Moreau community through parent education nights, Wednesday liturgies, athletic events and volunteerism.

Moreau Catholic High School makes a concerted effort to reach out to the larger surrounding community in Hayward and San Francisco, as well as the Philippines and New Orleans. The week the Assessment Team visited, the school community was gathering together donations for the Children’s Hospital in Oakland.

While there is a career day for alumni to return to campus, it might be helpful to find additional ways for the alumni community to support current students and to help them become better acquainted with the rich Moreau tradition. Graduates who have been called to serve in religious vocations would bring insight into the Catholic identity of the institution. Students who left the area to attend Holy Cross colleges and universities such as St. Edwards, University of Portland and the University of Notre Dame could be essential in providing information on what Catholic education provides on the collegiate level including service learning opportunities.

Moreau Catholic might want to consider even more opportunities for students and families to worship or pray together at the school. Likewise, there might be value in the faculty and staff as a community coming together more frequently for a liturgy or retreat experience. A further opportunity for reflection might also come from a shared faculty experience of service; making this visible to the student community through pictures or video would reinforce the value of service to others.

### **Pillar 3: Service**

Listening to the Moreau Catholic Community--Board, parents, students, faculty, staff and administration--it is evident that service plays an integral part in the lived experience of the school and in carrying out the mission of Holy Cross and the Gospel. From the Board we heard that the graduates have a sense of social responsibility and are very involved in the community.

Several programs in the area of service which serve the Moreau Catholic community were commended by the students, faculty and staff as being exemplary. In particular, the Link Crew and Saints and Scholars programs were given outstanding marks. The Link Crew is instrumental in providing a welcoming environment and accompanying the underclassmen students in their journey at Moreau. In hearing from the freshmen who have benefited from the service they received and from the juniors and seniors who have been their mentors, it is clear that the program is invaluable. Also, several students mentioned that the Saints and Scholars offers them an opportunity to serve those with different learning styles, as well as the "Cookies, Cocoa and Cram" in which faculty and students assist those in need before finals week.

Regarding service to the Church and civic community, while some spoke about the Philippines and other service experiences, many students spoke about their experience in their sophomore service project at St. Anthony's in the Tenderloin District. For many of them it was instrumental in their development of seeing service as an 80 hour requirement to the value of service as a life-time commitment. They mentioned that the experience "put a face" on the poor.

When asked if they know of service that the faculty and staff are involved in, the students said that they are not aware of any. However, many said that they see their teachers performing service everyday. They do not know if they help in a homeless shelter, but they do see and experience the care that they receive on a daily basis: being available before or after school, giving individual attention, and being able to share problems or concerns with faculty, staff or counselors.

When presented with the unlikely scenario of Moreau Catholic eliminating the 80 hour service requirement, the students overwhelmingly and emphatically said "no." A student commented: "Without the service dimension, this school would not be Moreau Catholic."

It is obvious that the four Holy Cross themes of bringing hope, building respect, educating hearts and minds and being family are lived out in the service of Moreau Catholic High School.

Moreau does an outstanding job in providing financial aid for those who find it difficult to fulfill the financial obligation. The Board said that they are committed to finding a way to make Moreau Catholic more affordable and attainable for those who cannot afford to attend.

The Mission Assessment Team supports Moreau Catholic High School continuing to explore and implement more institutional service learning projects at all grade levels. The team also commends the effort of the Board and administration in efforts to make a Catholic education a viable option for families who struggle to meet the financial obligations. Likewise, the team commends the school for efforts to help students who struggle to meet high academic standards.

#### **Pillar 4: Prayer**

Both the diversity and the inclusive nature of Moreau Catholic High School are obvious to a visitor. The two Holy Cross themes related to family and building respect are noticeable within the school community. Moreau Catholic is believed by students to be a community in which all are welcomed. The school community promotes an attitude of love of neighbor and respect.

There is a visible prayer life in the school involving the entire school community. Students are called upon to compose prayers and to lead them. The school day starts with prayer and prayer at the school is often quite personalized with prayers for the specific needs of individuals or groups. The school offers a weekly liturgy for all members of the school community and a monthly school-wide liturgy. The campus ministry team is actively involved in these liturgies and in supporting school prayer. This team views itself as the "spiritual leaders of the school." An added factor at Moreau Catholic High School is the respect that students and the rest of the school community believe is given to the prayer of all, regardless of their faith or how they define their God. There likewise seems to be no issue for non-Catholics and non-Christians in participating in the prayer life of the school community.

The school community seems to exemplify a mindfulness of others. There is prayer for one another, there is prayer for community needs, there is prayer of petition on behalf of students and the rest of the community, especially in times of difficulty or loss. The school community does seem to take care of one another in a variety of ways. The campus ministry team deserves credit for seeing that this is fostered.

The retreat program as outlined has great potential. Like the school administration, the Mission Assessment Team would hope the school could find ways to increase student participation and find financial support for the effort. The service effort with the poor and needy in San Francisco is a wonderful opportunity for sophomores.

Although the Theology program has a strong academic component, the visiting team believes it may be time for the school to review the program, especially with respect to the changed needs of students in recent years and the diversity of their pre-Moreau experience in religious studies. This may be especially important given the U.S. Catholic Bishops emphasis on the need for a strong catechetical dimension in secondary programs of religious studies and theology.

Thus, the Mission Assessment Team supports the school's own recommendations in this area and would suggest as well that they be broadened. We suggest that the curriculum and graduation requirements in theology and religious studies be reviewed and defined in terms of scope and sequence and the perceived student need for more faith-filled scripture study. We also suggest that the campus ministry program be reviewed and defined, including staffing, and that ways be found to strengthen its relationship with the theology and religious studies areas. We encourage you in your efforts to strengthen student participation in school liturgies. We also encourage the strengthening of the student retreat program and looking at ways to offer additional faculty and staff retreats or days or recollection.

## **Conclusion**

It is clear that the mission of Moreau Catholic High School is alive and well in the hearts and minds of the majority of board members, administrators, faculty and staff and students. The mission does seem to be the lens through which major decisions are viewed by the Board of Trustees and the administration. What is notable is the level at which the Holy Cross nature of the school is understood and communicated by students.

What does not always appear clear within the school community is that the Catholic identity of the school is indeed recognized as a strength. For students, Moreau Catholic High School is understood to be a Catholic school. Some in the school community, however, have not always made the connection between the Holy Cross mission of the school and its Catholic identity. For Blessed Basil Moreau, these two identities were indistinguishable. His efforts in his school were to help re-establish the Catholic Church in a society ravaged by years of revolution and lack of authority. But his efforts as well were to transform society through the school by a strong focus on Catholic social teaching. Moreau Catholic is very true to Basil Moreau's vision: the religion and faith one comes with to the school are not that important; it is the values one holds when he or she leaves the school at graduation and later in life which are primary. For Basil Moreau the school was to transform society by transforming the students who experienced the school; it is clear this is the effort of Moreau Catholic High School today.

The Mission Assessment Team wants to encourage the school community in your efforts to strengthen the connections between the Holy Cross Mission of Moreau Catholic High School and its Catholic identity. Moreau Catholic High School is a true Holy Cross school with strong Holy Cross values. We believe that you have identified for yourselves the areas in which you might put your energies for improvement. We would encourage you to take on the difficult task of reviewing and redefining the theology and religious studies curriculum and including in this review the relationship with the campus ministry program. This is a sensitive area in the Catholic Church today and we believe it will be of benefit to you to be proactive in this.

The Mission Assessment Team wishes to thank Mr. Terry Lee, Ms. Lauren Lek, the administration, faculty and staff, students and board members who gave of their time and energy in helping us during the days of our visit to Moreau Catholic High School. Be proud of what you are accomplishing in the lives of the young people at Moreau Catholic.